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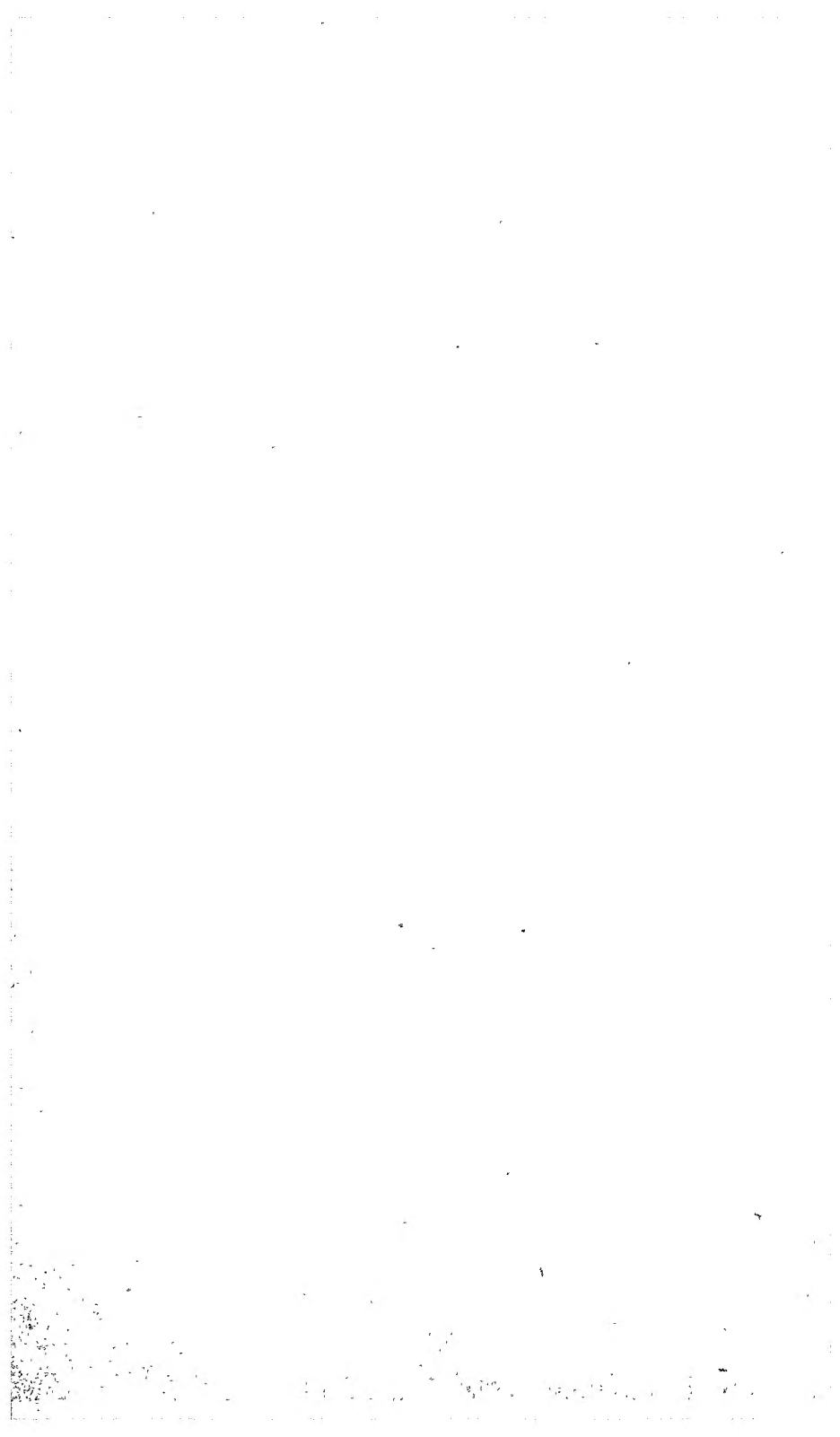
SKETCHES
OF
THE PAST AND PRESENT CONDITION
OF
THE INDIANS OF CANADA.

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SKETCHES OF THE PAST AND PRESENT
CONDITION OF THE INDIANS OF CANADA.

BY GEORGE M. DAWSON, D.S., ASSOC. R.S.M., F.G.S.

It is computed that the Indian population of the Dominion at the present day numbers nearly 100,000, distributed as follows—the figures being those of the last report of the Department of the Interior:—Ontario, 15,666; Quebec, 10,917; Nova Scotia, 2,116; New Brunswick, 1,425; Manitoba and N. W. Territories, 27,308; Athabasca District, 2,398; Rupert's Land, 4,370; British Columbia, 35,154; Prince Edward Island, 296.

Constituting thus nearly a fortieth part of the entire population of Canada, the Indians would even numerically be a not unimportant factor in questions of interior policy. As the original possessors of the land, however, though possessing it in a manner incompatible with the requirements of modern civilization, and as having been at times ready to assert that ownership, even in a forcible manner, they acquire quite a special interest; even without that afterglow of romance which follows the memory of the red man in those regions from which he has already passed away.

Though in the ante-Columbian period of American history nearly all the Indian tribes and nations appear to have been either drifting or gradually extending, by force of arms, in one direction or another, as indicated by their history or traditions, their movements were neither so rapid nor erratic as those which have occurred since the old organization and balance of power began to crumble before the advance of irresistible force from

without. We may therefore trace, with some degree of definiteness, the extension of the greater Indian families as they existed when first discovered, grouping together, for this purpose, many tribes which, though speaking the same or cognate languages, and with a general similarity in habits and modes of life, were not infrequently at bitter enmity among themselves, and in some cases had almost forgotten their original organic connection.

In North-eastern America, the great Algonkin family was numerically the most important, occupying a vast extent of country, from beyond the western end of Lake Superior, along its northern shores, to the region of the Ottawa—which appears to have been the original focus of this group of Indians—filling the great wilderness between the St. Lawrence River and Gulf and the southern part of Hudson's Bay, occupying New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and the present New England States, and stretching even further southward, to the confines of Florida.

There appear to have been first seven tribal divisions, which are said to have numbered each from 3,000 to 6,000 warriors, and are those referred to collectively by the Jesuits, who had comparatively little knowledge of the tribal intricacies of this part of the continent, as *ces grands bourgs des Naragenses*. Many of the names of these tribes and of their smaller subdivisions are still perpetuated in a more or less travestied form in the names of places; and in the history of the early days of the English colonies some of them appear continually. In addition to these, inhabiting Maine and New Hampshire, was the great Abenakis tribe, afterwards of some importance in Canadian history, when pressed northward by the disturbances incident to the establishment of the English Colonies. Closely allied to these, were the Malecetes and Micmacs of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. To the north of the Gulf and lower part of the River St. Lawrence were a number of roving tribes, afterwards known collectively as the Montagnards; in the Ottawa region, the Algonkins proper, and further to the north-west the Chippewas or Ojibways centred, when first discovered, near the Sault Ste. Marie, whence the name *Sauteux* applied to them by the French. These last were pressing westward, waging incessant warfare with the Sioux, and gradually dispossessing them of their hunting grounds about the sources of the Mississippi.

South of the Algonkin territory was the great Iroquois nation, extending from the southern part of Lake Champlain to

Lake Erie, and including the Senecas, Cayugas, Onondagas, Oneidas and Mohawks, a fierce, intelligent, unscrupulous confederacy or league of tribes, estimated afterwards by La Hontan at 70,000 in number, warring with neighbours and extending their boundaries in every direction, their very name a terror over half the northern part of the American continent. Allied to these by blood and language, although at the dawn of history at bitter enmity with them, were the Hurons, estimated at 30,000 to 40,000 in number, inhabiting the eastern border of the great lake which now bears their name. The Neutral Nation also inhabiting the peninsula of Upper Canada, and of the Iroquois stock, were, with the Eries, destroyed by the confederated Iroquois almost before their contact with the whites, and scarcely figure in history.

Following the more fertile country of the valley of the St. Lawrence, there appears to have been an outlying member of the great Iroquois-Huron family, holding the banks of the River and present sites of Montreal and Quebec, while the Algonkins, as we have already seen, peopled all the neighbouring regions.

Such were the main features in the distribution of the Indian nations of the north-east portion of the Continent at the time when they were about to be brought into contact with a stronger external power. In regard to their internal condition and progress in the arts, notwithstanding the gloss with which time may to some extent cover these aborigines, we cannot disguise from ourselves that they were for the most part the veriest savages. The northern Algonkins were found rarely, if ever, cultivating the soil, even on the most limited scale; hunters, fishermen, adding to their dietary such wild roots and berries as the country happened to afford; living from hand to mouth, with little providence even for the annually recurring season of cold; probably then, as now among the more remote tribes, not infrequently forced even to cannibalism during seasons of scarcity; wanderers, not as some of them afterwards became in the service of the great fur companies, over immense areas of the Continent, but each little tribe migrating, with the seasons, in its accustomed district, from the lake abounding in trout or white fish, to the region frequented by deer, or the rocky hills and islands where berries ripened most abundantly; battling, with scanty means, against the heat of summer and the winter's cold, and not usually living with any sense either of security in life or in

the possession of their meagre belongings; often at war, even among themselves, and their very slumbers haunted with an ever present shadow of dread; yet, withal, knowing no better state to envy, dimly looking forward to some distant future perfection, rudely imagined, in the "Happy hunting grounds"; regarding their own exploits in defence or retaliation—which had not yet paled before the greater "medicine" of the whites—as the highest expression of *good*.

The Iroquois, the Hurons and their congeners had raised themselves a little higher in the scale, adding to the uncertain pursuit of the chase the surer product of the field: they sometimes cultivated the ground, it would appear, on a pretty extensive scale, preserved their corn in granaries, and lived in permanent walled villages, situated with reference to the fertility of the soil. The Hurons alone, inhabiting in this way the shores of Georgian Bay and Lake Simcoe, were, as we have already seen, estimated by Father Sagard at between 30,000 and 40,000 souls. Pictures of the same mode of life are found in the account of the Canadian expedition of the winter of 1666 against the Mohawks, to the south of Lake Champlain, and in Cartier's quaint and simple narrative of his first visit to Hochelaga (now the city of Montreal), which he says was surrounded with "goodly and large cultivated fields, full of such corn as the country yieldeth. It is even as the millet of Brazil, as great and somewhat bigger than small peason, wherewith they live even as we do with our wheat." The Iroquois, though thus more advanced, were in customs and modes of thought essentially one with the other Indians, and used their greater resources as a means of waging more savage and effectual war. They were a scourge to the surrounding nations, and more especially hostile to their relatives the Hurons, the Iroquets—as the Indians found by Cartier inhabiting the banks of the St. Lawrence were afterwards called—and the whole race of the Algonkins. These peoples found themselves, at the time of the arrival of the Europeans, cruelly oppressed by the wars of the Iroquois, scarcely able to hold their own, and would, in the natural course of events, have been absorbed or destroyed by them, or gradually forced to retreat into the hyperborean region. The French, with whom we have more particularly to deal, like the Spaniards, constantly used the christianization and civilization of the natives as a powerful argument in favour of their exploring enterprises, and

really attempted to carry out their professions. In the early history of Canada we continually find the priest in advance of the explorer and the trader; and, though it is hinted that in some cases the traffic in peltries occupied part of the attention of the missionary, we seldom find them lending the Divine sanction to unprovoked violence or robbery.

The intercourse of the Europeans and Indians of the north-eastern portion of America can scarcely be said to have been begun by Cabot in his voyages of 1497-98-99, when he first discovered this part of the coast. With Cartier, in 1534 and 1535, in his memorable voyages up the St. Lawrence, the first real contact occurred. The natives appear to have received him often timidly, but were found ready enough to trade when friendship had been cautiously established. At the villages of Stadacona (Quebec) and Hochelaga he was received even with rejoicing, the natives bringing gifts of fish, corn and "great gourds," which they threw into his boat in token of welcome. It is evident, however, that they well understood and wished to maintain their territorial rights, for we find that when Cartier, in his first voyage, set up in the vicinity of the Baie des Chaleurs his "cross thirty feet high," the aged chief of the region objected to the proceeding, telling the French—as well as his language could be understood—that the country all belonged to him, and that only with his permission could they rightly erect the cross there. It was too, when, in 1541, Cartier attempted his abortive colony at Quebec, that the natives first manifested jealousy and a hostile spirit.

Much later, in 1607, when the permanent occupation of the country was begun by Champlain at Quebec, the erection of a fort sufficiently strong first received the attention of the colonists: showing that they did not place a too implicit confidence in the continued friendliness of the Indians toward their enterprise. The French would indeed have found the foundation of their colony a difficult matter, but for the state of the Indian tribes at the time of their arrival. The Iroquets of the St. Lawrence valley had, since the date of Cartier's second voyage, been exterminated, probably by the Hurons, and the Algonkin nations were in a state of chronic war with the too powerful Iroquois. Champlain, adopting the only policy open to him, the traditional one of intruders, allied himself, offensively and defensively, with his neighbours the Algonkins, thereby perpetuating the warfare

between these peoples, and initiating the long series of conflicts detailed in the early history of the colony, which were only stopped for a time by the peace of Montreal, in 1701, when representatives of tribes, from the Gulf of St. Lawrence to the Mississippi, to the number of 1,300 chiefs and deputies are said to have been present.

Time will not permit us, however, to trace the fortunes of the aborigines through the long period of colonial history, during which the Iroquois, allied to the English, and the Algonkins, supported and encouraged in war by the French, occupied a position, as, they said, between the blades of the scissors, in which their number and importance were continually diminishing. The history of the Indians in this period, is besides, so much that of Canada and New England that, though capable of treatment from our standpoint, it is too well known to need recapitulation here.

It has at times been affirmed that the English government did not extinguish the Indian title in Canada proper, when it took possession of the country. This is not however, strictly speaking, the case; for in the proclamation of George III, in 1763, consequent on the treaty of that date, by which Canada became finally British, the following passage, relating to the Indians, occurs:

"And we do further declare it to be our royal will and pleasure, for the present, as aforesaid, to reserve under our sovereignty, protection and dominion, for the use of the said Indians, all the lands and territories not included within the limits granted to the Hudson's Bay Company; as also the lands and territories lying westward of the sources of the rivers which fall into the sea, from the west and north-west, as afore said. And we do hereby strictly forbid, on pain of our displeasure, all our loving subjects from making any purchases or settlements whatever, or taking possession of the lands above reserved, without our special leave and licence, for that purpose."

Different commissions of enquiry into the condition of the Canadian Indians have since been issued from time to time, and of which those of 1847 and 1856 were probably the most important. In reference to the Indian title, the commissioners of 1847 thus state their views: * "Although the Crown claims the territorial estate and eminent dominion in Canada, as in other of the older colonies, it has ever since its possession of the

* Quoted by Hind, Canadian Exploring Expedition.

Province, conceded to the Indians the right of occupying their *old hunting grounds*, and their claim to compensation for its surrender, reserving to itself the exclusive privilege of treating with them for the surrender or purchase of any portions of the land. This is distinctly laid down in the proclamation of 1763, and the principle has since been generally acknowledged, and rarely infringed upon by the Government." These statements are interesting in connection with the difficulty—referred to further on—as to Indian title in British Columbia. In carrying out this policy, we find the Government paying sums of money to certain tribes, and providing them with annuities as their lands become desirable for settlement. The payments thus made, though often apparently large, were always small in proportion to the extent of territory ceded. The country, for instance, north of Lakes Superior and Huron remained in possession of the Ojibways till 1850, when the whole of this vast region, at least equal in extent to England, and inhabited by between 2,000 and 3,000 Indians was surrendered to the Canadian Government for \$16,640 paid down, and \$4,400 in perpetual annuity. On this, the Commissioners remark: "If we considered that it came properly within our province, we should not hesitate to express our decided regret that a treaty, shackled by such stipulations, whereby a vast extent of country has been wrung from the Indians for a comparatively nominal sum, should have received the sanction of the Government." In a table prepared under the same commission is the following summary of areas of land given up, at different times, by the Indians of Canada, with the price paid to them per acre:

Ojibways, $2\frac{1}{2}d.$ per acre.....	7,373,000
" $\frac{1}{8}d.$ "	6,737,750
Ottawas, Pottawatamies, Chippewas and Hurons, $\frac{2}{3}d.$ per acre.....	2,001,078
Delawares, 2s.	
Saugeen Indians, $3\frac{1}{2}d.$ per acre.....	1,500,000
Ojibways of Lake Superior, as already given. Acreage not known.	

Average rate per acre about $1\frac{1}{2}d.$

In view of such facts, we may well ask upon what principle they have been remunerated for their lands; certainly not by any standard either of their absolute or relative value, rather

by that of the relative ignorance of the various tribes at the time they were treated with, and the urgency of their then present wants. Looked at from this point of view, the transaction loses altogether the aspect of an equitable purchase. It must be evident that the Government, in such arrangements, does *not* fully acknowledge the Indian title, the "territorial estate and eminent dominion" being vested in the crown, and the claim of the Indians restricted practically—though not patently in the transactions as effected with the Indians—to right of compensation for the occupancy of their hunting grounds.

It is very difficult to arrive at any certain conclusion regarding the original number of the Indian population of this part of the Continent. The New England tribes are, as we have seen, said by some authorities to have each possessed several thousand warriors. The Iroquois were estimated by La Hontan at 70,000, and the Hurons, at an earlier date, at from 30 to 40,000. Garneau, on the contrary, gives, as the result of careful calculation, numbers very much smaller, and supports them by remarks on the exaggerated estimates of the notions formed by some travellers. He allows, for instance, to the whole Algonquin race 90,000 only, and to the Hurons and Iroquois together 17,000. Though the first estimates may be too great, these almost certainly err on the other side.

In the four eastern provinces of the Dominion, Ontario, Quebec, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island, there are at the present day about 30,000 Indians, the remnant of the former numerous population. A considerable number of Indians in Quebec, and north of the settled districts, in the northern and north-western part of Ontario, still remain in a condition little, if at all, superior to that of their ante-Columbian ancestors. Their lands, unsuited for agriculture, are not coveted by the whites. They have only the advantage of a certain immunity from pillage and war, and of being able to procure from the Hudson Bay Company and other traders such articles of European manufacture as they may be able to afford. After describing the condition of these wild western tribes, Dr. Wilson, in the last edition of his "Prehistoric Man," writes of them: "It is not a little strange to find such pagan rites perpetuated among nomads still wandering around the outskirts of settlements occupied by descendants of colonists, who, upwards of three centuries ago, transplanted to the shores of the St. Lawrence the arts and

laws of the most civilized nation of Europe. The regions thus occupied by savage tribes are annually coasted by richly laden merchant fleets of Britain; and the ocean steamers have now brought within a few day's sail of Europe the outcast descendants of the aboriginal owners of the soil. But they experience no benefit from the change. The Mistassins and Naskapees exhibit all the characteristics and some of the most forbidding traits of the Indian savage. They are clothed in furs and deer-skins; their only weapons are the bow and arrow, and they depend wholly on the bow and drill for procuring fire."

With by far the greater part of the Indian population, however, this state has long been of the past. In all the provinces, save Prince Edward Island, the Indians hold reserves from the Crown. On that Island, the lands they inhabit were obtained for them by the Aborigines' Protection Society and the liberality of private individuals. The Indians are considered wards of the Crown, and are in a state of pupillage, not possessing the right to dispose of or in any way alienate their lands, which are administered for them by a department of the Government. The funds available for Indian purposes, schools, missions, annuities, etc., are partly tribal, being derived from the sale or lease of Indian lands, partly general, by direct grant, or interest on the Indian fund held in trust by the Government. This fund, in the provinces of Ontario and Quebec, in 1877, amounted to over \$2,900,000; tho total revenue available for distribution being over \$240,000. The sources of tribal funds are more fully specified as follows: Collections on account of lands sold, timber dues, stone dues; bonuses paid for the privilege of working timber limits on Indian reserves; rents collected from occupiers of Indian lands under lease; and smaller sums from licence fees, trespass dues, and a moiety of fines collected from persons convicted of having sold liquor to Indians.

In these older provinces, most of the Indians have made considerable material progress, and in some cases show a satisfactory desire to accumulate property and cultivate the land. By the last report of the Superintendent of Indian Affairs, we learn that the total number of Indians settled on reserves is 22,809. The total number of acres under cultivation is 60,501; houses owned, 4,347, besides barns and stables; horses, 2,741; cows, 2,360, besides other animals, ploughs, harrows, waggons, fanning mills and many other agricultural implements. It is, however, un-

pleasant to note the complaints of the superintendent that the schools are very generally poorly appreciated; only a small proportion of the children attending with any regularity.

The remnants of some of the Indian tribes of this part of the Dominion have now drifted far from their original localities. Of the Iroquois, a portion converted by the French—who established missions among them in 1657—separated themselves from their native cantons to the south of Lake Ontario, and settled on lands provided for them on the banks of the St. Lawrence, at Caughnawaga, St. Régis, and the Lake of Two Mountains. Their number at the present time (including some Algonkins living with the Iroquois at the last named place) is 2,964. The greater part of the Iroquois nation—allies, as we have seen, of the English against the French in early colonial days—were loyal to the Crown during the revolutionary war, and on the establishment of the United States many of them migrated to Ontario, under their great chief Joseph Brandt, 1785. They were accorded a reserve of about 1200 square miles, of which they now possess only a small part. These refugees number, at the present day 4,495, and are living on the Grand River, Bay of Quinté, and River Thames. Another considerable band of the Iroquois, chiefly composed of Indians of the Seneca tribe, still inhabit a portion of their original territory in the State of New York, possess a reserve of 66,000 acres, and are good and prosperous farmers. Another party, early in this century settled in Ohio, but were afterward removed to the Indian Territory to the south, and are now stated to number 240. One more small detachment, travelling westward in the service of the fur companies, now frequent, or lately did so, the eastern base of the Rocky Mountains, near the head-waters of the Saskatchewan.

The once powerful nation of Hurons or Wyandots, are now reduced to a mere handful. In 1648, the Iroquois recommenced their war against these people with unwonted fury, and during 1649 and '50, they were finally beaten and as a nation destroyed. After the attack of 1648 the remnants of the tribes found refuge for a time among the neighbouring nations, but were shortly afterwards again gathered together, to perish, for the most part, some by renewed attacks of their enemies, others by famine, during the winter of 1649-50. The survivors, about 300 in number, under the guidance of the missionaries who had been labouring among them, migrated eastward, but were apparently

pursued by misfortune. Many perished in attempting to cross from their place of refuge on Isle Joseph to the mainland, others were cut off by prowling Iroquois. The miserable remnant crept through the wilderness of the upper Ottawa to Montreal, and then to Quebec, where for years they inhabited the Isle of Orleans; but still from time to time harassed by their enemies, moved into the city of Quebec itself, and on the conclusion of peace, removed to Ste. Foye, and afterwards to Lorette, where they now are, to the number of 295. A second small fraction of the Hurons, centering for a time about Detroit, were accorded a reserve at Anderdon in Ontario, but during the present century, have declined from 200 to 76 in number. Still another colony became possessed of lands in Ohio, ceded these lands to the United States, in 1832, and were removed to Kansas, where, in 1855, many became citizens, and the land being divided among these, the remainder were again removed to the Indian Territory, where they now number 258 souls. Such has been the fate of these cultivators of corn and tobacco, the natives, of all others of the northern part of the Continent, most nearly attaining a civilized state.

The vicissitudes to which the Algonkins have been subjected are not so great. Those who have come within the influence of civilisation occupy a great number of small reserves and villages scattered through Ontario and Quebec. The Abenakis, the constant allies of the French, leaving the northern part of New England, now reside at St. Francis and Becancour, and have decreased from 1000, the number remaining in 1760, to 335.

If we had any satisfactory means of estimating the real amount of Indian blood represented by the peoples classed as Indians, we would find the recognized remnant of the native race a much smaller fraction than it appears in the census. In many of the bands scarcely a pure-blooded Indian can be found, and in all great admixture has occurred. Of the Abenakis Father Marquette writes: "Our Indians are, with but very few exceptions, *métis*, or half-breeds. Here I do not know one Abenakis of pure blood: they are nearly all Canadian, German, English, or Scotch half-breeds. The greater portion of them are as white as Canadians, and the dark complexions we see with many are owing in most cases to long voyages." The Hurons of Lorette can scarcely be distinguished as Indians. They have almost entirely exchanged their native tongue for the French patois, and

would probably long since have ceased to be distinct, but for their claim to share in the distribution of certain tribal funds administered by the Government, which have now ceased to be of real benefit, and act instead as a deterrent to the complete independence and self-reliance of the members of the community. Similar statements might be made with regard to other tribes, and many of the more advanced Indians begin to show a wish to emancipate themselves from their state of pupillage. This they are now enabled to do on easy terms by the Act of 1876.

The discovery of the great North-west, and contact of its Indian tribes with the whites did not occur till long after that of the older provinces of Canada; and our knowledge of the west coast and British Columbia is almost an event of yesterday. The famous journey of Joliet and Marquette to the Mississippi was made in 1672, followed, ten years later, by that of La Salle. In 1727, a Canadian fur company had advanced trading posts to Lake Pepin on the Mississippi; but we find Charlevoix writing from Montreal, in 1721, with nothing more definite than the vague rumours of the existence of the "Lac des Assiniboils" and surrounding region now forming part of Manitoba. Not till 1731 was this country and the valley of the Red River of the north, discovered by Varennes de la Verandrye, accompanied in his expedition by his sons, and a missionary Jesuit. By 1748, the French, with the wonderful energy in discovery characteristic of them at this time, had pushed their explorations far up the valley of the Saskatchewan; and they had already crossed the water-shed separating this valley from the Arctic basin, when Sir Alexander Mackenzie, an officer of the North-west Fur Company of Canada, in 1789, began his voyages of discovery in that region. This intrepid traveller, in that year, traversed the entire length of the river now bearing his name, reaching the Frozen ocean, and, in 1793, only 85 years ago, was the first European to set foot in the great interior of British Columbia.

The wide-stretching Algonkin family of Indians already described as filling so large a part of North America, extended far into the western country. The Sioux, touching, in the early historical years, the west end of Lake Superior, were then being dispossessed of these regions, and their hunting grounds about the sources of the Mississippi, by the Algonkin Chippeways, who before settlement began in the Red River valley, appear to have usurped a part of that region, and the Lake of the Woods coun-

try, and made of them their western stronghold. With fish and berries in abundance, and lake strung to lake, forming an amazingly complicated water communication through all the forest country, the woodland Indian may here be seen to the greatest advantage; and, as in the summer he lazily paddles his bark canoe from island to island, sets his nets in the narrows, or joins in the harvesting of wild rice in the creeks and swamps of the lake margin, one may still almost imagine that his tenure is undisputed, and his life a realization of Hiawatha. But winter is before him, and in the past are legends of fierce conflicts, and massacres by the dreaded Sioux.

West of the Chippeways, but inosculating with them, and spreading far up the valley of the Saskatchewan, were the Cristeneaux or Crees, who speak a language only dialectically different from that of the Chippeways, but exhibit some different traits, being in great part *Plain Indians*. South of the Crees, and inhabiting the river of the same name, where the Assineboines, a tribe which separated from the Dakotas or Sioux, almost within the limit of authentic history, and, like the parent stock, differed much in physical characteristics, and altogether in language from the Crees. Though thus the offspring of the Dakotas, they were bitterly hostile to them, much as occurred further east with the Iroquois. South and west of these, but scarcely stretching far north of the forty-ninth parallel in early times, were the various bands of the Sioux, or Nadouessioux of the early travellers, the first name, by which they are now most commonly known, being an abbreviation of the second, which is a Chippewa word, meaning enemies, and was sometimes also applied by these people to the Iroquois; the Sioux calling themselves Dakotas. Still farther west were the different tribes of the Blackfoot confederacy, roaming between the head-waters of the Missouri, the Rocky Mountains and upper Saskatchewan.

The Indians thus classified according to race, were, however, naturally divided, from the earliest times, by the character of their environment, into two great groups,—those of the plains and those of the forests. The former, typically exhibited in the Sioux, Assineboines, and Blackfeet, were and are physically and mentally better developed than the latter. Their lives were more active, and, with abundance of food in the innumerable herds of buffalo which then covered the plains from the Red River to the foot of the Rocky Mountains, while fierce, treacherous and

turbulent, they had leisure to develop some of the better qualities often attributed to the American savage, and to invent those curious mystic ceremonies appropriate to the seasons, which among the Mandans of the upper Missouri, according to Catlin, had assumed great complexity and an elaborate symbolism. The plain Crees, or those inhabiting the northern margin of the prairies, were not so warlike nor physically so well formed as their southern neighbours, though, coming first in contact with the whites, and supplying themselves with fire-arms, then unknown to the wilder tribes, they were for a time able completely to turn the tables on their ancient enemies, and carried their conquests far and wide. At the present day matters are again reversed, for the Crees, still supplied by the Hudson Bay Company with the venerable flint lock musket, meet the southern tribes who trade on the Missouri, and are frequently able to afford to arm themselves with the best breech-loaders. In this region, one may see in a single tribe every stage in perfection of arms exemplified, from the bow with arrows tipped with hoop iron to the Winchester-Henry repeating rifle. It is worthy of note, in this connection, that while the Indians may be much more formidable with improved rifles, I have heard them complain that they are really more at the mercy of the whites, for, on the outbreak of hostilities, measures are taken to prevent them from obtaining suitable cartridges, which they are, of course, utterly unable to make for themselves. The woodland or *thick-wood* Crees much resemble in habits and appearance the other western tribes of the Algonkins.

North of all these, is still another entirely distinct family of Indians, the Tinneh, Athabascans, or Chipewyans. These inhabitants of the true "Wild North Land," are divided into many tribes and sets, speaking dialects more or less diverse. From Churchill and the western shores of Hudson Bay they stretch northward to the Esquimaux of the Arctic coast, people the valley of the Mackenzie, the great almost unknown interior of Alaska, and southward in the interior region of British Columbia as far as the Chilcotin River. Remnants of the same people are found scattered among other tribes far to the south, giving rise to interesting questions as to their pre-historic distribution; but the region still entirely occupied by them in the north is truly vast, being not less than 4,000 miles in extent from south-east to north-west. Within their domain are the Barren Grounds,

traversed and described by Sir John Richardson, Franklin and Back, a picture of bleak desolation, yet in their grassy savannahs supporting cariboo and other game enough to maintain the wandering bands of natives. They are as yet the undisputed possessors of the great Peace River valley, in Mackenzie's time abounding in buffalo and elk, and destined, at no very distant date, to form a wealthy province of the Dominion. North of this, in the Athabasca-Mackenzie region they roam over a whole continent of barrens, scrubby forests, wide muskegs, and inosculating systems of lakes; while in the northern interior of British Columbia and Southern Alaska they own a veritable sea of mountains.

Resembling the forest inhabiting tribes of the Algonkins in many respects, they yet differ from them in some important points. The name Tinnéh or Dinne means simply *the people*, and in combination with some peculiar affix forms the distinctive name of almost every tribal subdivision of the race. In thus speaking of themselves as pre-eminently *the people*, they are not peculiar, but follow the custom of many of the American tribes of different family relationships. When discovered, the Tinnéh were constantly at war with all the surrounding nations, including the Esquimaux, to the north, the Crees and southern Indians of British Columbia, to the south, and were, besides, engaged in intertribal wars within their own territory. They do not appear, however, to be in general distinguished for bravery or success in their warlike expeditions. Though scattered over so great an area of country, they show a close general resemblance in customs and disposition. They do not cultivate oratory to the same extent as the southern Indians, nor have they any regard for the truth, though, curiously enough, remarkably honest, both among themselves and towards strangers. They are, however, accomplished and persistent beggars. They already begin to cultivate the ground to a small extent around some of the forts and missions in the southern part of their country, and though generally lazy, when once embarked in a voyage or other enterprise, as a rule, work well. They seldom indulge in a plurality of wives.

Omitting mention for the present of the remaining Indians of British Columbia, such are the great divisions by race of the nations of the North-west. The Esquimaux, living along the whole Arctic sea-board, are never likely to come in conflict with the whites, and, from the inhospitable nature of their country,

will always remain secure in the possession of their lands. Of more practical importance, however, than this family grouping is the division into Indians of the plains and those of the forests and northern country, as already pointed out. The tide of settlement has already begun to flow, which in a few short years will cover the portion of the Great Lone Land inhabited by the prairie tribes, with farmers and stock-raisers; and it is in disposing equitably and amicably of the claims of the plain Indians, and in providing for their honest and peaceful support when the buffalo, their present means of livelihood, shall have passed away, that Canada will find her greatest Indian problem. In contrasting the Indian policy of the United States and Canada, it is unquestionable that the latter has generally shown consideration and friendliness toward these people; while the former, with few exceptions, has *practically* pursued a method harsh and aggressive; but it is often forgotten that the circumstances of the two countries for many years past have been very different. In the Western States the uncompromising edge of the advancing tide of immigration has been creeping across the plains—constant broils, outrages and reprisals characterizing its spread. In Canada we are only about to enter on this phase, and in no way but by great forbearance and tact can similar—though probably not so great—trouble be averted.

In 1812 Lord Selkirk founded his colony on the Red River, having acquired from the Hudson Bay Company in the previous year a grant of land for colonization; but, like the government of the Dominion at a later date, finding that he had afterward to arrange with the Indians for their right of ownership. In 1817, several chiefs agreed to give to the King, for the use of the Earl of Selkirk, a tract of land bordering the Red and Assiniboine Rivers, as far back on each side as a horse could be seen under (*i. e.* easily distinguished); but we find that it was afterwards made a subject of complaint by the Indians, that they never received for the land more than a first payment, which they considered as preliminary to a final bargain. The quit-rent was understood to be 100 pounds of tobacco, paid annually to the chiefs.

Selkirk's colonists, entering the country by way of Hudson Bay and the Nelson River, were chiefly men from the northern islands of Scotland, and there mingling with French-Canadians—old voyageurs of the fur Companies—soon, like these people,

took to themselves Indian wives, usually from among the Crees. Thus arose the Metis or half-breed population of the Red River, for a long time hunters rather than farmers, and as yet—especially the French half-breeds—in too many cases making but a half-hearted attempt at the cultivation of the soil. Yearly expeditions on a great scale—of which we have all read—were made by these people against the buffalo, in early days abounding in the Red River valley itself. Gradually, however, under the attacks of the people, the increasing demand for robes in all quarters, and the quantity of pemmican required by the Hudson Bay Company for the supply of their posts, the great northern herds of buffalo were thinned, and year by year the Red River hunters had to travel farther in search of their game. At last the connection between the Peace River herds and those to the south was broken along the line of the Saskatchewan, and the former all but annihilated; and at the present day a wide belt of country near and south of the Missouri, separates the buffalo still remaining in the South-Western States from those of the north, which are congregated in a limited area near the foot of the Rocky Mountains in the British possessions, and surrounded by a cordon of hungry savages. With this change, a great alteration in the position of the various Indian tribes has occurred. The Assineboines and plain Crees have followed the retreating herds to the south and west, while the thick-wood Indians, formerly confined to their forests by the pressure of these tribes, have issued on the plains; and natives from the vicinity of the Red River and great lakes of Manitoba may now be found even to the Coteau of the Missouri. The remaining buffalo at the present time inhabit a portion of the territory of the Blackfeet; but those Indians do not, now, in the absence of valuable game, try to maintain their former extensive boundaries, and are hemmed in by their hereditary enemies the Sioux and Assineboines to the east, and Crees to the north. In 1874 I met a large camp of Cree Indians on the Milk River at the 49th parallel, a point farther south than I know them to have attained before. In this year, basing my estimate on the information obtainable in the country itself, I ventured to state that the northern herd of buffalo could scarcely maintain its existence as such for longer than twelve or fourteen years, and that at or before that date the trade in pemmican and robes would cease to be of importance. Unless the regulations adopted by the North-

west Council are very strictly enforced, and possibly even in spite of this check, the buffalo must become practically extinct within a very few years. In view of these facts, measures cannot too soon be taken to render the plain tribes self-supporting, on some other basis than that afforded by the chase of the buffalo. Their wandering habits unsuit them for agricultural pursuits; but some of them already possess considerable numbers of horses, and, by encouraging them in stock-raising, and especially in the introduction among them of cattle, from which, under proper regulations, they might derive a great part of their food, a solution of the problem might be found. This, at least, is the only easy transition from their present condition as hunters to a more civilized state; and if this can not be made to succeed, they will for the most part, and at no distant date, be thrown as paupers on the State.

The Indians of Manitoba and the North-west Territory, in the Report of the Minister of the Interior for 1877, are stated to number about 27,308; to which must be added about 1,500 Sioux, refugees from the south, implicated in the Minnesota massacre of 1862; also, for the Athabasca District and Rupert's Land, 6,768 (probably an under-estimate); and now, it would appear Sitting Bull and his compatriots, who, though Sioux, do not represent any particular tribe of that nation, but the disaffected and outlawed members from many bands. Since the acquisition of this territory by the Dominion, seven treaties have been concluded with the Indians, by which, collectively, nearly all the land likely to be given for permanent settlement has been ceded. The last of these was that with the Blackfeet, covering an area of some 35,000 square miles in the south-western corner of the territory, inhabited now by about 5,000 Indians; this nation having been reduced by about one-half during the last twelve or fifteen years by bad whisky, murders, and small-pox.

The general principles on which these treaties have been framed are:—The entire surrender of the territory, a reserve being provided for the Indians, and it being understood that they may continue to hunt and fish as before, without restriction as long as the lands are unoccupied; the establishment and maintenance of schools; the payment of an annuity of a few dollars to members of the tribe, a census being taken in the first instance; the yearly distribution of ammunition, twine for nets, etc., to a stated amount; and the presentation of agricultural

implements, cattle, etc., once for all, to bands settling down to farm; also the payment of a salary to the chiefs and their headmen; and the presentation of medals, flags, and a bonus in money on the conclusion of the treaty. No one who has not had some experience in dealing with Indians can realize how great the difficulty in concluding such arrangements with them is: how much talking and iteration is required, and how long they take to deliberate and discuss among themselves the propositions as they understand them; the most trivial point occasionally appearing, for some incomprehensible reason, to assume the greatest importance.

The half-breeds of the Red River have already been alluded to, and nowhere on the North American Continent is the result of the mingling of the European and native races so clearly seen as in our North-West Territory. In what is now the province of Manitoba, a separate race of Metis has grown up since the date of Lord Selkirk's colonization, and these people, holding themselves to some extent aloof from the whites and Indians, are recognized in the terms of confederation of that province, and granted large tracts of land as reserves for themselves and their children. At the erection of the province, the half-breeds numbered, according to the census, 9,770; but this, according to Prof. Wilson, was afterwards found to be an underestimate. While some of these people are scarcely distinguishable from Europeans, others are to all intents and purposes Indians, and it is curious to find in the report of the payment to Indians under Treaty No. 4, that great difficulty was experienced from the number of half-breeds ordinarily recognized as such, who desired to be included with the Indians and draw annuities. In this connection, Mr. G. W. Dickenson remarks: "The question as to who is, and who is not Indian, is a difficult one to decide: many whose forefathers were whites, follow the customs and habits of the Indians, and have always been recognized as such. The chiefs Côte, George Gordon, and others, and likewise a large proportion of their bands, belong to this class. A second class has little to distinguish it from the former, but has not altogether followed the ways of the Indians. A third class, again, has followed the ways of the whites, and has never been recognized or accounted among themselves as anything but half-breed."

When the buffalo retreated so far in the west that it became inconvenient to carry on the hunt from the Red River, a portion

of the half-breeds to a great extent relinquished this mode of subsistence ; while others, among whom those speaking French are in the majority, continued to follow these animals,—selecting wintering places far out on the plains, and returning to the settlements only occasionally, with the products of the chase. These hunting half-breeds form—or formed a very short time ago—a body partaking of the character of a tribe among the Indians. They are generally accompanied by a priest, who, in concert with some of the older men, frames rules for the guidance of the camp, administers those which have already become fixed by use in the community, and decides the camping places and dates of movement of the camp, in conformity with public opinion. In the far west these people seem generally to have allied themselves with the Sioux against the Blackfeet, but gave to their allies only so much material assistance as to ensure the continuance of their useful friendship. In July, 1874, I came upon the “Big Camp” of half-breeds near the Milk River. It consisted of over two hundred tents of dressed skins, or canvas. Every family possessed Red River carts at least in equal number to that of its members. These, with the tents, are arranged in a circular form, on camping, to make a *correl* or enclosed space for the protection of the horses. It was stated that about 2,000 of these animals were owned by the half-breeds of the Camp. The Indians, as a whole, are jealous of the half-breed hunters, understanding well that their business-like manner of pursuing the buffalo for robes, not only drives these animals from their feeding grounds, but aids largely in their extermination. The late ordinance of the North-West Council, above referred to, will probably, by the restrictions it imposes, break up this half-breed tribe and drive its members to other pursuits. It is certain that the Metis, as a whole, will continue to approximate more completely to the whites both in appearance and manners. Physically they are robust, and possess great power of endurance, though not infrequently liable to pulmonary complaints.

In British Columbia, where, in the absence of a trustworthy census, the native races are roughly estimated at 30,000, Canada has her latest, and, what appeared, for a time, likely to be her most vexatious “Indian Problem.” Races of the Tinné stock inhabit, as we have already seen, the whole northern interior of that country, extending, southward, to the Chilcotin River in latitude 52°. Bordering these on the south, and occupying

part of the province, are Indians belonging to the *Shuswap* or *Selish* connection, divided into many tribes, bearing different names, but all allied in language, the differences between the dialects being generally not so great as to prevent intercommunication. In a region physically isolated, in the extreme south-east, are the Kooteney Indians, who appear to differ from all the rest, and are perhaps more closely allied to the Indians of the interior plains, whither they resort, at certain seasons, for the purpose of hunting the buffalo. Along the coast, and on the outlying islands, are scattered a great number of tribes differing more or less, and in former years frequently hostile one to another. Into the race divisions of these it is not proposed to enter, nor indeed is it possible as yet to speak very certainly on this question. In customs, modes of life and thought, there is complete diversity between the coast Indians and those of the interior, which practically transcends the race divisions, being like to in kind, but even greater in degree, than that existing between the plain Indians and those of the woods, in the interior of the continent.

In the northern interior of British Columbia, the Indians, inhabiting a country for the most part thickly wooded, still remain, as they have always been, hunters and fishers; but in many places they now also cultivate small garden patches, producing potatoes, turnips and such other vegetables as require little attention. For their winter supply of food they generally depend chiefly on fish, which is dried and cured during the summer. On all the tributaries of the Fraser, salmon is taken, in some years abundantly. Those tribes nearer the coast, have generally succeeded in maintaining against the coast Indians, the control of some part of the various shorter rivers on which salmon can be caught. Thither they make an annual migration, which they look upon as a sort of holiday-making, revelling during the season in abundance of fresh fish, and on their return carrying back with them supplies for the cold months. They still trade with the coast tribes to some extent, obtaining fish oil and European goods for furs; and this interchange, continuing since time immemorial, has resulted in the formation of well-beaten trails, of which the Bella Coola trail, and the so-called *Grease Trail* (over which, in the far north, oilcan oil is packed up from the seaboard) are best known. In the last century, when direct European trade was carried on only along the coast, these interior

Indians were obliged to satisfy all their needs for manufactured articles through the intermediation of the coast tribes. This intercourse led to the general diffusion of the remarkable Chinook jargon, which can only be referred to here. In the more remote parts of this northern country, the natives have changed very little since its first discovery. In 1793, Sir Alexander Mackenzie accompanied a party of them, as they travelled toward their fishery on the Dean or Salmon River. In June, 1876, I journeyed for a couple of days with a similar party going to the same traditional locality for the same purpose, and, with scarcely a word of alteration, Mackenzie's description might have been applied. Every man, woman and child carried a "pack" of size in proportion to their strength, many of the women being, in addition, encumbered with infants, and even the dogs having strapped to their backs a proportion of the common burden of camp equipage or traps. The larger articles and provisions were usually packed in square boxes made of light wood, skillfully bent round, and pegged together so neatly that, with the addition of grease and dirt rubbed into the corners, they are water-tight, and can be used for boiling fish, hot stones from the fire being thrown in till the water is heated. Smaller loads are carried in net-work bags made of raw hide, and slung, together with a blanket, over the shoulders. All were in good humour, and it was with the greatest difficulty I could persuade one to leave his companions to guide me to the southward, where I wished to go. They travelled at leisure, frequently resting for an hour or so, the women attending to their children, the men sleeping in the shade, or gambling with marked sticks, as Mackenzie describes.

In the southern part of the interior, the Indians have come much more freely in contact with the whites, and though many never saw a white face till the gold excitement of 1859 occurred, they have already advanced very materially. In the early days of gold mining, labour was scarce and in great demand, and, consequently, every Indian who could and would work was employed at high wages. From this, many of them became stock-raisers to a small extent, river boatmen, and packers; while others cultivated the soil, sometimes producing more than they required for their own support. Such is their state at present, and on them most of the white settlers rely for aid in tilling, harvesting, and stock herding. While, however, the younger

men take readily to these pursuits, many of the older still prefer to live as they did formerly, chiefly on the products of the fishery and chase; and in districts where settlement has not yet penetrated, whole bands still trust almost entirely to these, their primitive means of support.

Along the coast, the natives are, and always have been, almost exclusively fishermen. They hollow from the great cedar trees graceful and sea-worthy canoes, in which they frequently make long voyages, and formerly, in some cases, ventured far from land in pursuit of the whale. Their villages are along the margin of the sea, on a coast generally rocky and rugged, with little arable land. They engage in the chase to a very limited extent, and seldom even venture far into the dense forests, of which they appear often to entertain a superstitious dread, peopling them in imagination with monstrous and fearful inhabitants. Along many of the estuaries and harbours are long lines of shell-heaps, evidencing the indefinite antiquity of their feasting and camping. At the present day, many of the coast Indians are moderately industrious, working on farms, in the coal mines at Nanaimo, or as sailors in small coasting schooners. In Mr. Duncan's charge, at Metlakatla, in the north, is an example of a self-supporting and comfortable community, the result of genuine missionary labour.

Of all the coast tribes, the Indians of the Queen Charlotte Islands are probably the most intelligent and competent. When the earlier navigators visited this region, they were the sea-dogs of the coast, and carried their piratical expeditions far and wide, often engaging in fierce conflicts with the Ucltas, and other tribes who attempted to bar their passage of the narrows at the north end of Vancouver Island. Though, like most of the sea-board tribes, in features remarkably coarse, they are lighter in complexion than the others, often so much so that a rosy colour is discernible in their cheeks. Their superior attractions in this respect have been unfortunate for them, as many of their women resort to Victoria and other towns for the worst purposes, and, owing to disease, they are rapidly diminishing. Their tribal name is *Haida*, and they are remarkable above all the other Indians of the Coast for the size and excellence of their wooden houses, which are ornamented with huge sculptured posts, rising like obelisks or minarets; and also for their great skill and taste in carving in grotesque and complicated patterns all their imple-

ments and utensils. The style of this carving, on the one hand, resembles that of China and Japan, and, on the other, that of Mexico and Central America. The Haidas are dexterous and successful fishermen.

Such is a brief sketch of the Indians of British Columbia; from which, however, it will be evident that, owing to the physically diversified character of the country, and correspondingly diverse habits of the natives, they required at the hands of the whites a quite special treatment. It was probably owing to want of information that the Dominion government at first proposed to apply, unmodified, to the whole area of the new province, the traditional Canadian policy of granting extensive reserves to the natives. This led to a long, and in some instances acrimonious correspondence between the general and local governments; and also to accusations by philanthropic societies, imputing injustice and indifference toward the natives to the old colonial government. It may be interesting to go over, briefly, the chief points raised in this controversy, which will also in some degree serve to explain the anomalous condition of the British Columbia Indians in respect to material progress.

Many interesting facts bearing on the first contact of whites and natives on the West Coast are to be found in the volumes of Meares, Portlock and Dixon, Cook, Vancouver and other early explorers; and various arrangements and treaties were made in these early times, which have long since, however, lost all force, and must be omitted here. Among the official documents relating to more recent times, we first find fourteen treaties concluded with the natives by Mr., afterwards Sir James, Douglas, acting for the Hudson Bay Company. These apply to Vancouver Island, chiefly to its southern and south-eastern part, and are dated in 1850 and 1852, several years before the gold excitement of 1858-59. A lump sum was paid on the conclusion of each treaty, which was looked upon as a sale, under the following conditions, to quote from one of them, viz:—"That our village sites and enclosed fields are to be kept for our own use, for the use of our children, and for those who may follow after us; and the land shall be properly surveyed hereafter. It is understood, however, that the land itself, with these small exceptions, becomes the entire property of the white people for ever; it is also understood that we are at liberty to hunt over the unoccupied lands, and to carry on our fisheries as formerly."

In 1858 attention was prominently called to British Columbia, owing to the discovery of gold, and the rush of miners from all quarters, and, accordingly, we find next among the papers (dated in July of that year) an extract from a despatch of Lord Lytton, as Secretary of State for the Colonies, to Douglas, then appointed Governor of the region, recommending kind treatment of the natives, and ordering that in all cases of cession of land, subsistence, in some form, should be granted to them. In September of the same year, there is a second despatch from Lytton, enclosing a memorial from the Aborigines Protection Society, which gives reasons for fearing that, the miners then flocking to the country, the Indians would be harshly treated, and advising, justly, that the native right to the soil should be recognized. In venturing to point out means of satisfying the natives, however, the Society makes various suggestions, some of which, to any one acquainted with the circumstances of the country, look sufficiently absurd. It is said, for instance :—" To accomplish the difficult but necessary task of civilizing the Indians, and of making them our trusty friends and allies, it would seem to be indispensable to employ in the various departments of government a large proportion of well selected men more or less of Indian blood (many of whom could be found at the Red River) ! who might not only exert a greater moral influence over their race than we could possibly do, but whose recognized position among the whites should be some guarantee that the promised equality of races should be realized." Red River being in actual distance and in manners as remote from Victoria as is St. Petersburg from London, this part of the scheme is, to say the least of it, visionary.

Next follows some additional correspondence between Governor Douglas and the Colonial Office in 1858-59, of a similar tenor, in which both parties agree in the advisability of endeavouring to locate the Indians in their villages, and render them self-supporting. Douglas, however, instanced as specially to be avoided, the method originally pursued by the Spanish Catholic missionaries to California, where the Indians, though fed, clothed, and taught to labour, were kept in a state of dependence, not allowed to think, act, or acquire property for themselves, and when freed from control were without self reliance, more helpless and degraded than at first. Also, that since pursued toward the same Indians by the American Congress, of supporting them at great cost by the State, the natives nevertheless rapidly degenerating.

In March 1861, the House of Assembly of Vancouver Island prepared a memorial, recapitulating the means adopted by the Hudson Bay Company to extinguish the Indian title, stating that the Indians of the Island have a strong sense of property in land, and that regions then being settled still belonged to the natives. It was feared that bad feeling would arise between the races; but the Colony, being unable to raise £3,000, which would be necessary to purchase the rights of the Indians, asked the Home Government to advance this sum, which was afterwards to be repaid by the sale of public lands. The Secretary of State for the Colonies, however, though ready enough to offer good advice, as we have seen, promptly answers this communication in a curt note, stating that the affair being purely a colonial matter, Her Majesty's Government could not undertake to supply any money.

In a voluminous correspondence, from different sources, extending from 1861 up to the date of the Confederation, it would seem that the idea of recognizing the Indian title to the whole mainland country never appears to have occurred to the authorities; but that the method adopted was to ask the Indians of any particular locality what plot of land they wished to possess, and to make this reserve for them. It generally appears that all the land asked for was given, and sometimes even more than requested, the Governor indeed expressly directing that when a larger area was requisite to the support of the Indians, it should at once be allotted to them. In most cases the natives seem to have been satisfied with this arrangement, though we discover that certain priests, missionaries among them, were already advising the Indians to make larger claims for land. It is evident, in fact, that at this time—to quote from a report by T. W. Trutch, as Chief Commissioner of Lands and Works in 1867, which, though referring specially to the lower part of the Fraser, may be taken as representing the state of affairs over the whole interior:—"The subject of reserving land for the Indians does not appear to have been dealt with on any established system during Sir James Douglas's administration. The rights of the Indians to hold lands were totally undefined, and the whole matter seems to have been kept in abeyance, although the land proclamations specially withheld from pre-emption all Indian reserves or settlements. No reserves of lands specially for Indian purposes were made by official notice in the *Gazette*, and those Indian reserves which

were informally made, seem to have been so reserved in furtherance of verbal instructions only from the Governor," or even in some cases were made over to the Indians on the ground by him personally.

About this time, it was found that many reserves made in this loose way, were seriously impeding settlement by blocking access to valuable lands, and otherwise; and, moreover, that the land locked up in reserves was frequently far in excess of the requirements of the aborigines. The authority by which many of these reserves were made, was then disavowed by the government, and, in a letter from the Colonial Secretary (Nov. 1867), the original intention of the Government is defined as having been in all cases to grant the Indians lands cultivated by them, and so much in addition as to bring the reserves up to about ten acres per adult male: it being further stated "that reserves that have been laid out of excessive extent should be reduced as soon as practicable. The Indians have no right to any land beyond what may be necessary for their actual requirements, and all beyond this should be excluded from the boundaries of their reserves. They can have no claim whatever to any of the land thus excluded, for they really never have possessed it,—although, perhaps, they may have been led to view such land as a portion of their reserve. "The Indians appear in almost all cases to have acquiesced quietly in the reduction, feeling compensated to some extent by the greater definiteness given to their claims by actual survey. They are reported in most instances to have been "well satisfied," "satisfied," or "submissively satisfied."

The whole matter of Indian lands was thus in a very unsatisfactory state to be handed over to the Dominion authorities at the date of the admission of this province (1871), for even where substantial justice had been done to the Indians, the records were indefinite, or altogether wanting. On the appointment by the Dominion of a Superintendent of Indian affairs, the misunderstanding which of late attracted special attention began, and soon resulted in the accumulation of a great number of letters, if to no more substantial issue. In the terms of union it was provided that the General Government should assume control of the Indians, and, to quote, that "a policy as liberal as that hitherto pursued by the British Columbia Government shall be continued by the Dominion Government after the Union;" further, that tracts of lands, "such as it has hitherto been the practice of the

British Columbia Government to appropriate for that purpose," shall be handed over to the Dominion in trust for reserves, etc. These provisions, while apparently guaranteeing justice to the Indians, really proved a bar to the well meant policy of the Dominion. The land grants in British Columbia were by no means on so liberal a scale as usual in the other provinces, and were, further, very unequal, being in some cases only about five acres to a family, while over the whole province the average was not more than 6 to 10 acres. The Dominion Government wished the size of reserves to be fixed at 80 acres per family. The local government proposed 20 acres, which was accepted by the Dominion for the coast, but for the interior—where white settlers are allowed to pre-empt a double quantity of land—it was wished to increase this to 40 acres. The local government would not accede to this, and it eventually appeared that they intended the 20 acre basis to apply only to new reservations, and not to lead to the enlargement of those formerly made. Dissatisfaction and agitation meanwhile arose among the Indians, who soon became aware, to a more or less complete extent, of the state of affairs. Certain missionaries get the credit of partly fomenting and rather exaggerating the difficulty, with a view of bringing about an arrangement suited to their own interests; but to what degree this may be true I do not know.

In the end, after several propositions and counter-propositions, an agreement was arrived at between the two governments, of which the following is the substance :—

A commission of three is appointed, one member by each of the governments, the third jointly. This body shall enquire into all matters connected with each band of Indians, and fix reservations, for which no standard size is given, each nation being dealt with separately, on an equitable and liberal basis. It is also provided that, in accordance with the increase or decrease of the number of Indians, the reserves may from time to time be enlarged or diminished in size.

This body has since been reduced to a single commissioner, who is superintending the allotment of permanent reserves on an equitable basis to the Indians of the province.

While, on comparing the Indian policy of the British Columbia Government with the Canadian, where 80 acres may be taken as the minimum size of reserve, the provision made for the Western Indians appears slender, it will be seen from the sketch already

given of the habits of life of the Indians, and nature of the country, that it was by no means without reason that the British Columbia Government objected to the crude application of the rule found to work well in the East, to the very different and variously situated natives of the West Coast; that, while reserves even on the 80 acre basis would be barely sufficient in some parts of the interior, where large areas are required for stock ranges, it would be useless and foolish to reserve great tracts of arable land for the coast tribes, who are by nature fishermen, and could under no circumstances be induced to cultivate the soil on any but a very limited scale. The policy obviously best for the natives of British Columbia, is to aid them in following those paths which they have taken already; to assist the tribes of the interior to become successful stock-raisers and farmers, by granting them suitable reserves and grazing privileges; to encourage those of the coast in fishing and becoming seamen, instructing them in improved modes of preserving their fish, and of preparing it for sale to others. If the sites of their villages and fishing stations are secure to them, they will require little more in the way of reserves. To grant to each family 80 acres of good land, it would be necessary to move many tribes far from their traditional haunts, and to this they would only submit under compulsion. In reviewing the state of the natives of the West Coast, it would appear that, though in many instances the British Columbia government seems to have transgressed the limits of strict justice toward them, and has departed from the precedent elsewhere established, in refusing to acknowledge the right of the Indian to the soil; that he, thrown more on his own resources, mingling among the whites with an equality of rights before the law, and exempt from the interference which has elsewhere distinctly retarded the progress of the savage towards civilization and independence, has worked out in a measure his own temporal salvation, has passed the critical stage of first contact with the whites, and in many cases bids fair, at no distant date, to form an important constituent of the civilized population of the country, and this even before the native has been largely mingled with foreign blood.

It is often said that the ultimate fate of the Red Man of North America is absorption and extinction: just as European animals introduced into Australia and other regions, frequently drive those native of the country from their haunts, and may even

exterminate them, and as European wild plants accidentally imported, have become the most sturdy and strong in our North American pastures; so the Indian races seem to diminish and melt away in contact with the civilization of Europe, developed during centuries of conflict in which they have had no part, but during which their history has moved in a smaller circle, ever returning into itself. Even the diseases engendered in the process of civilization, and looked upon in the Eastern hemisphere with comparative indifference, become, when imparted to these primitive peoples, the most deadly plagues. Dr. J. C. Nott (as quoted by Prof. Wilson), writes: "Sixteen millions of aborigines in North America have dwindled down to two millions since the Mayflower discharged on Plymouth Rock; and their congeners the Caribs have long been extinct in the West Indian Islands. The mortal destiny of the whole American group is already perceived to be running out, like the sand in Time's hour-glass." Dr. Wilson has, however, himself shown that though the Indian as such can not very much longer survive, Indian blood in quantity quite inappreciated by casual observers now courses through the veins of white persons of the continent.

The ultimate object of all Indian legislation must be, while affording all necessary protection and encouragement during the dangerous period of first contact with the whites, to raise the native eventually to the position of a citizen, requiring neither special laws of restraint or favour. When it is found that the paternal care of the State begins to act as a drag on the progress of the Indian, and that after reaching a certain stage all further advance ceases, the state of dependence must be done away with. To render this change possible, and to effect it in cases where it would already be advisable, the Dominion Act of 1876 was framed. That this measure has not been adopted too soon appears from the concurrent testimony of many interested in the welfare of the Indian, and acquainted with the working of the present system. In concluding, a few of the opinions expressed on this subject may appropriately be given. The Rev. J. Marault (as quoted by Dr. Wilson), writes:—"Many suppose that our Indians are intellectually weak and disqualified for business. This is a great mistake. Certainly as far as the Abenakis are concerned, they are all keen, subtle, and very intelligent. Let them obtain complete freedom, and this impression will soon disappear. Intercourse with the whites will develop their talent

for commerce. No doubt some of them would make an improper use of their liberty, but they would be few in number. Everywhere, and in all countries men may be found weak, purposeless, and unwilling to understand their own interests; but I can certify that the Abenakis generally are superior in intelligence to the Canadians. I have remarked that nearly all those who have left their native village, to go to live elsewhere free, have profited by the change." Dr. Wilson himself remarks (in another place):—"The system of protection and pupilage under which, from the most generous motives, the Indian has hitherto been placed in the older provinces, has unquestionably been protracted until, in some cases at least, it has become prejudicial in its influence. It has precluded him from acquiring property, marrying on equal terms with the intruding race, and so transferring his offspring to the common ranks." The Honorable Mr. Laird, when Minister of the Interior, as the result of his enquiries in connection with the Indian bill above referred to, speaks in the following terms:—"Our Indian legislation generally rests on the principle that the aborigines are to be kept in a condition of tutelage, and treated as wards or children of the State. The soundness of the principle I cannot admit. On the contrary, I am firmly persuaded that the true interests of the aborigines and of the State alike require that every effort should be made to aid the red man in lifting himself out of his condition of tutelage and dependence, and that it is clearly our wisdom and our duty, through education and every other means, to prepare him for a higher civilization by encouraging him to assume the duties and responsibilities of full citizenship."

It is to be hoped that these enlightened views will be practically carried out in the case of all the tribes throughout the Dominion; and that the Indian, freed from tutelage and raised from dependence, may be induced to enter into such of the callings of civilized life as may be most congenial to him, and may thus become an element of strength and progress in the body politic. He undoubtedly possesses qualities which fit him not unequally to bear his part with the other races which enter into the composition of our people, in building up the future greatness of the Dominion.

